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The Grand Fleet, 1914-1916: its Creation, Development and Work.

By Admiral Viscount JELLICOE of Scapa, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O.
(New York: George H. Doran Company. 1919. Pp. xv, 510.
\$6.00.)

To the casual reader, doubtless, the most interesting part of this book is the account of the battle of Jutland, between the British Grand Fleet and the German High Sea Fleet, that took place on May 31, 1916, off the west coast of Denmark.

To the thoughtful man however, to the man solicitous for the future history of his own country, the most interesting part is the part that shows the relative efficiencies of the two contending navies, the causes which produced them, and the lessons for the future which they bear. The fact was generally known that the British navy was greater in the number of its vessels and its men; but which was the more efficient navy was a thing unknown. We knew that the British navy surpassed in quantity, but did not know which navy surpassed in quality.

By the battle of Jutland the German fleet was driven off the sea, and compelled to seek the safety of its bases behind the fortress of Heligoland and the mine fields of the German coast.

But the important question still remains, which fleet was the better in quality; which fleet had been the better prepared to fulfill the duty to discharge which the nation had maintained it; which navy had shown the greater amount of strategic wisdom in the preparation of its personnel and material for the day of battle?

This is the paramount question which this book answers, and which it answers in unmistakable language, though not in direct terms. Its importance rests on the fact that, no matter how much money any nation may spend on its navy, no matter how many ships and men it may maintain, no matter what the cost of those ships and men, the nation is vitally interested in securing the system by which the greatest possible fighting value shall be attained. For the fighting value which a fleet finally shows in battle is merely a demonstration of the excellence of its design and preparation; its actual performance in battle is merely the result of the training of its personnel and the quality of its material.

Of the two factors, personnel and material, it need hardly be pointed out that the personnel (including the planners, the ordnance officers, the constructors, engineers, etc.) is immeasurably the more important; one reason being that the personnel designs, constructs, and operates the material. For this reason, the possession of the best material proves the existence of the best personnel.

In the case of the British and the German navies, the question as to which had been the better designed and prepared, and was therefore the more efficient, has a peculiar interest from the fact that the two navies had been conducted under two clearly different systems; the German having been designed and prepared under the general staff system, which

had made the German army the most efficient in the world; while the British had been designed and prepared under the admiralty board system, under which it had been conducted (with suitable changes from time to time) for several centuries. It is to be noted here that some of the changes in the admiralty system had been toward a general staff, and had been brought about by reason of the obvious success of the Germans with their system. The main difference between the systems lay in the fact that the German embodied a separate planning division under the direct control of the chief of staff, who had no administrative duties, and whose sole task was to plan on a large scale, leaving to other parts of the organization the task of carrying out these plans. The analogy may be pointed out between so conducting a navy and say, producing a book—the author supplying the plan, and the publishers printing the book. In the British admiralty, the duties of the first sea lord were partly in administration and partly in planning; in the German navy, the duties of the chief of staff were merely to plan. Which was the better system?

Jellicoe's book does not state that the German was the better, but it does state that the German material was the better; and it does state that he himself made a radical and sweeping change in the administration of the British Grand Fleet, *after* war had been declared and *after* he had assumed command!

Having been brought up for half a century to regard the British navy as the highest development of organized human power since the days of Rome (with the possible exception of the German army), I have to admit a feeling of astonishment on reading on page 41 of Jellicoe's book that, on taking command, he doubled his staff; that he found it necessary to take such a momentous step at that late day. What becomes of all our ideals of preparedness, when we find that that state of affairs existed in the British navy?

In leading up to his account of the battle of Jutland, Admiral Jellicoe analyzes and describes very clearly the differences in "armament, protection and displacement" of the battleships and battle-cruisers of the two navies, and shows that the German vessels were distinctly superior in both weight and quality of side armor and deck armor, as well as in submerged torpedo tubes; and that the British were superior in heavy turret guns, while the Germans carried heavier guns in the secondary battery; that the German boilers were more economical for their weight; that the German shells were fitted with "a delay-action fuse which, combined with a highly efficient armour-piercing projectile, ensured the burst of shell taking place *inside* the armour of British ships instead of *outside*, or whilst passing through the armour, which was the case with British shells of that date fired against the thick German armour".

He also shows that the German ships were more skillfully constructed to resist torpedo hits, and that "the result was that, although it is known that many German capital ships were mined and torpedoed during the

war, including several at the Jutland battle, the Germans have not so far admitted that any were sunk, except the pre-dreadnought battleship *Pommern*, and the battle cruiser *Lutzow*". . . while, "on the other hand, British capital ships, mined or torpedoed, rarely survived". He also states that the Germans had expended more on gunnery and torpedo practices; "that German submarines possessed a radius of action and sea-keeping qualities considerably greater than those of our submarines"; that "the Germans possessed an excellent practice ground in Kiel Bay, with every appliance for carrying out gunnery exercises". . . and that "We were not in so fortunate a position. There had been no recent opportunity for carrying out gunnery and torpedo exercises and practices"; and he indicates a number of reasons for suspecting not only that the skill of the Germans at gunnery and torpedo practices was greater than that of the British, but that the torpedoes themselves were better. He also shows that the optical devices of the Germans for finding the range, etc., were more scientific and practical. In speaking of the night action, one sentence reads,

The use of star shell, at that time unfamiliar to us, was of the greatest use to them in locating our destroyers without revealing their own positions; and, secondly, their searchlights were not only more powerful (much more so than ours), but their method of controlling them and bringing guns and searchlights rapidly on to any vessel sighted was excellent. It also appeared that some system of director-firing was fitted to the guns of their secondary armament.

A brief review like this is inadequate to the task of giving more than the gist of Jellicoe's book. To me the gist is the proof that, despite the fact that the battle of Jutland was a victory for the British, the German navy was the better, and was vanquished merely because it was the smaller.

A fact like this, super-important as it is to us, is super-important only in so far as it may lead us to see the reason why Germany secured a better navy than Great Britain. The reason, of course, is that Germany followed the better system (the general staff system) whereby the planning for the whole conduct of the navy was in the hands—and brains—of experts specially trained for the task.

Great Britain has now virtually adopted this system.

BRADLEY A. FISKE.

Der Weltkrieg in seiner Einwirkung auf das Deutsche Volk. Herausgegeben von MAX SCHWARTE. (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer. 1918. Pp. viii, 513.)

THE spirit of the work is that of March, 1918, when Germany still appeared "militarily in an unconquerable position on land and sea" (p. 98). The editor and his twenty-five collaborators include corps and divisional commanders, vice-admirals, professors, *Oberbürgermeister*, *Re-*